

Washington, DC – Education, crime fighting, the economy, and the environment in Santa Clara County, received a significant boost after Congress funded several vital projects and initiatives at the request of Rep. Mike Honda (CA-15).

Agencies such as the Santa Clara Crime Lab, the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority and the Housing Trust of Santa Clara County, among others, will receive over \$43 million in federal funds, which Honda, a member of the House Committee on Appropriations, secured despite a roller coaster budget and appropriations year in Washington. Over 30 projects and initiatives throughout the county will receive federal dollars. The projects range from health clinics, to gang prevention programs, to flood protection and environmental restoration.

“The good holiday news is that despite the misguided priorities of President Bush and many Republicans, we are tackling critical problems for our district, and the country, such as the affordable housing shortage and crime fighting,” Honda said. “Sadly, the President thinks these are not priorities and prefers to burn billions of dollars in Iraq instead.”

The funding is part of the Omnibus Appropriations Bill, which was approved by both the House and Senate this week to finance government operations. Honda voted against the portion of the Omnibus that included money for the Iraq War. President Bush is expected to sign H.R. 2764.

The federal dollars secured by Honda address critical areas of need which neither federal or local agencies can address for various reasons.

“Such specialized funding secured by Congressman Honda focuses on problems that federal agencies often overlook, either because of their macro approach, or because their budgets have been cut,” said Carl Guardino president and CEO of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group. “Local governments simply cannot afford to fill this void alone. I commend Congressman Honda for helping to bridge the critical gaps in areas that affect our local economy and quality of life, such as health, housing, the environment and transportation.”

For the Santa Clara County Crime lab, for example, \$1.2 million will help upgrade critical equipment such as the one used in DNA testing, an investment which not only helps identify the perpetrator of a crime, but also clears the innocent.

The Housing Trust of Santa Clara County will get \$147,000 which will be used to help first time homebuyers with the down payments for their homes.

“In an area such as ours, where the cost of housing is stratospheric, these programs are a necessity,” Honda said. “Businesses cannot attract good people if housing costs are prohibitive, and prices of this kind dramatically shrink the middle class.”

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority also will receive about \$392,000 to help fund its Zero Emission Bus Demonstration Program. This program will help the VTA purchase hydrogen-powered buses, which do not produce greenhouse gases. This money will help the agency meet state law, which requires that mass transit fleets with more than 200 buses purchase at least two environment-friendly buses.

Other agencies or initiatives that will receive funding are:

Various flood control and environmental restoration projects including the Guadalupe River Flood Protection - \$1.7 million; and the South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Study for restoration of the salt ponds - \$785,000.

The Santa Clara University Library - \$478,000

San Jose BEST Youth Gang Reduction Program - \$493,500

